

House Resolution 27 - Introduced

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1 1 HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. ____
1 2 BY FORD and MURPHY
1 3 A Resolution urging the government of Turkey to grant
1 4 the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international
1 5 recognition, ecclesiastical succession, and the right
1 6 to train clergy of all nationalities and to respect
1 7 the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical
1 8 Patriarchate.
1 9 WHEREAS, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, located in
1 10 Istanbul, Turkey, is the Sacred See that presides in a
1 11 spirit of brotherhood over a communion of
1 12 self-governing churches of the Orthodox Christian
1 13 world; and
1 14 WHEREAS, the See is led by Ecumenical Patriarch
1 15 Bartholomew, who is the 269th in direct succession to
1 16 the Apostle Andrew and holds titular primacy as primus
1 17 inter pares, meaning "first among equals" in the
1 18 community of Orthodox churches worldwide; and
1 19 WHEREAS, in 1994, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew,
1 20 along with leaders of the Appeal of Conscience
1 21 Foundation, cosponsored the Conference on Peace and
1 22 Tolerance, which brought together Christian, Jewish,
1 23 and Muslim religious leaders for an interfaith
1 24 dialogue to help end the Balkan conflict and the
1 25 ethnic conflict in the Caucasus region; and
1 26 WHEREAS, in 1997, the Congress of the United States
1 27 awarded Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew with the
1 28 Congressional Gold Medal; and
1 29 WHEREAS, following the terrorist attacks on our
1 30 nation on September 11, 2001, Ecumenical Patriarch
2 1 Bartholomew gathered a group of international
2 2 religious leaders to produce the first joint statement
2 3 with Muslim leaders that condemned the 9/11 attacks as
2 4 "antireligious"; and
2 5 WHEREAS, in October 2005, the Ecumenical Patriarch,
2 6 along with Christian, Jewish, and Muslim leaders,
2 7 cosponsored the Conference on Peace and Tolerance II
2 8 to further promote peace and stability in southeastern
2 9 Europe, the Caucasus region, and Central Asia via
2 10 religious leaders' interfaith dialogue, understanding,
2 11 and action; and
2 12 WHEREAS, the Orthodox Christian Church, in
2 13 existence for nearly 2,000 years, numbers
2 14 approximately 300 million members worldwide with more
2 15 than 2 million members in the United States; and
2 16 WHEREAS, since 1453, the continuing presence of the
2 17 Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey has been a living
2 18 testament to the religious coexistence of Christians
2 19 and Muslims; and
2 20 WHEREAS, this religious coexistence is in jeopardy
2 21 because the Ecumenical Patriarchate is considered a
2 22 minority religion by the Turkish government; and
2 23 WHEREAS, the government of Turkey has limited the
2 24 candidates available to hold the office of Ecumenical
2 25 Patriarch to only Turkish nationals, and from the
2 26 millions of Orthodox Christians living in Turkey at
2 27 the turn of the 20th century and due to the continued
2 28 policies during this period by the Turkish government,
2 29 there remain less than 3,000 of the Ecumenical
2 30 Patriarch's flock left in Turkey today; and
3 1 WHEREAS, the government of Turkey closed the
3 2 Theological School on the island of Halki in 1971 and
3 3 has refused to allow it to reopen, thus impeding
3 4 training for Orthodox Christian clergy; and
3 5 WHEREAS, the Turkish government has confiscated
3 6 nearly 94 percent of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's
3 7 properties and has placed a 42 percent tax,
3 8 retroactive to 1999, on the Baloukli Hospital and Home
3 9 for the Aged, a charity hospital run by the Ecumenical
3 10 Patriarchate; and
3 11 WHEREAS, the European Union, a group of nations
3 12 with a common goal of promoting peace and the

3 13 well-being of its peoples, began accession
3 14 negotiations with Turkey on October 3, 2005; and
3 15 WHEREAS, the European Union defined membership
3 16 criteria for accession at the Copenhagen European
3 17 Council in 1993, obligating candidate countries to
3 18 achieve certain levels of reform, including stability
3 19 of institutions guaranteeing democracy, adherence to
3 20 the rule of law, and respect for and protection of
3 21 minorities and human rights; and
3 22 WHEREAS, the Turkish government's current treatment
3 23 of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is inconsistent with
3 24 the membership conditions and goals of the European
3 25 Union; and
3 26 WHEREAS, Orthodox Christians in this State and
3 27 throughout the United States stand to lose their
3 28 spiritual leader because of the continued actions of
3 29 the Turkish government; and
3 30 WHEREAS, the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate
4 1 of the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle, a group of
4 2 laymen who each have been honored with a patriarchal
4 3 title, or "offikion", by the Ecumenical Patriarch for
4 4 their outstanding service to the Orthodox Church, will
4 5 send an American delegation to Turkey to meet with
4 6 Turkish government officials, as well as the United
4 7 States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, regarding
4 8 the Turkish government's treatment of the Ecumenical
4 9 Patriarchate; NOW THEREFORE,
4 10 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
4 11 That the House of Representatives urges the government
4 12 of Turkey to uphold and safeguard religious and human
4 13 rights without compromise; cease its discrimination of
4 14 the Ecumenical Patriarchate; grant the Ecumenical
4 15 Patriarch appropriate international recognition,
4 16 ecclesiastic succession, and the right to train clergy
4 17 of all nationalities; and respect the property rights
4 18 and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and
4 19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the House
4 20 of Representatives is authorized and directed to
4 21 transmit appropriate copies of this resolution to the
4 22 President of the United States, the United States
4 23 Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, the Ambassador
4 24 of the Republic of Turkey to the United States, and to
4 25 the members of Iowa's congressional delegation.
4 26 LSB 2120YH 83
4 27 jr/rj/14